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BATTLE ROYALE

KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

BATTLE ROYALE

SHIRO IWA Junior High School - Grade 9/Class B - Student Roster

Boys: 21 - Girls: 21 - Total: 42

15: Noriko Nakagawa

8: Kayoko Kotohiki

1: Mizuho Inada

15: Shuuya Nanahara

8: Yoji Kuramoto

1: Yoshio Akamatsu

16: Yuka Nakagawa

9: Yuko Sakaki

2: Yukio Utsumi

16: Kazushi Niida

9: Hiroshi Kuronaga

2: Keita Iijima

17: Satomi Noda

10: Hirono Shimizu

3: Megumi Etou

17: Mitsuru Numai

10: Ryuhei Sasagawa

3: Tatsumichi Ooki

18: Fumiyo Fujiyoshi

11: Mitsuko Souma

4: Sakura Ogawai

18: Tadakatsu Hatagami

11: Hiroki Sugimura

4: Toshinori Oda

19: Chisato Matsui

12: Haruka Tanizawa

5: Izumi Kanai

19: Shinji Mimura

12: Yutaka Sato

5: Shogo Kawada

20: Kaori Minami

13: Takako Chigusa

6: Yukiko Kitano

20: Kyoichi Motobuchi

13: Yuichiro Takiguchi

6: Kazuo Kiriyama

21: Yoshimi Yahagi

14: Mayumi Tendo

7: Yumiko Kusaka

21: Kazuhiko Yamamoto

14: Sho Tsukioka

7: Yoshitoki Kuninobu

BATTLE ROYALE

BY

KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

VOL. 8

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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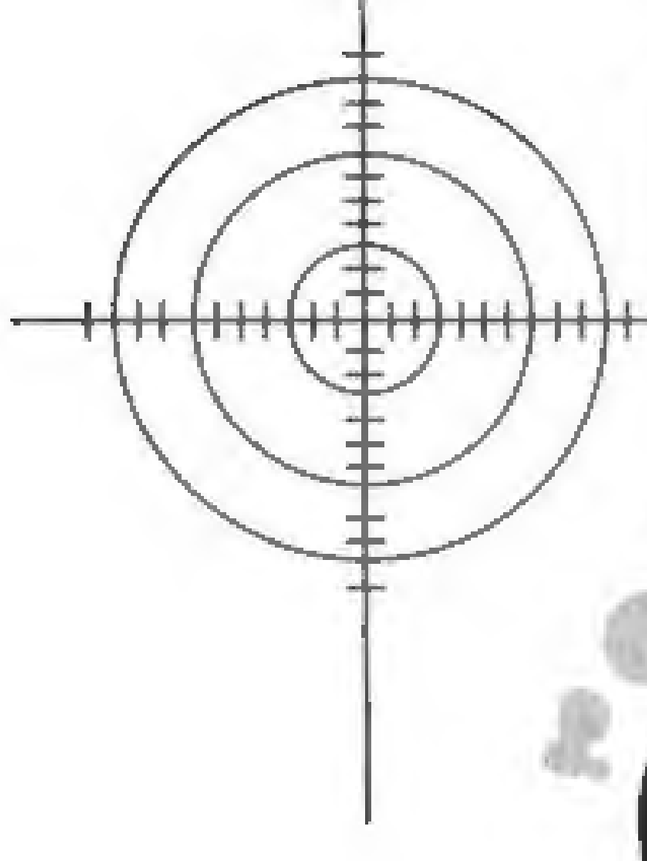
BATTLE ROYALE

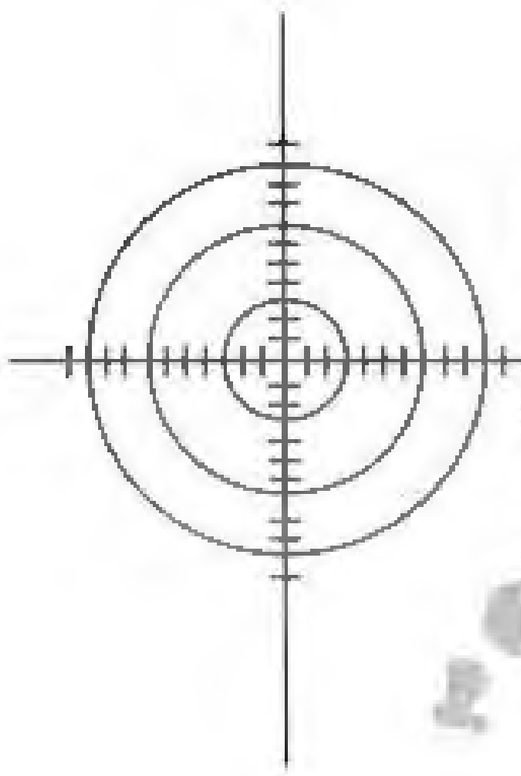
STORY THUS FAR



In the near future, a random class of 9th graders has been kidnapped, marooned on an island, and forced to compete on "The Program", a popular reality show that requires its contestants to battle to the death.

One of these students is Mitsuko "Hardcore" Souma. Beautiful, but oh-so-dangerous, Mitsuko is widely accepted as the only female in Class B with a shot at winning "The Program". Ever happy to oblige and never one to disappoint, she's already eliminated four of her classmates. One of them was Takako Chigusa, a fiercely independent young lady who also happened to be a close friend and companion to Hiroki Sugimura. The honorable Hiroki isn't one to give in to the desire for vengeance, but the horror of "The Program" is enough to bring even the strongest of beliefs into question. And with his mastery of martial arts, Hiroki could prove to be a formidable enemy indeed.

Meanwhile, Shogo Kawada and Noriko Nakagawa have managed to escape the psychotic Kazuo Kiriyama's crosshairs, thanks to the sacrifice of their friend Shuuya, who distracted Kazuo while the two fled to safety. Now, tucked away, the two wait for the return of their friend...and wait...and wait...



BATTLE ROYALE

KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

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THP

ZZOOO..

ZZOOO..

CR-RRK

FFOO..

KRK KRIK

JUST IN CASE...

.....

IS HE DEAD ?

!!

CHAPTER 56: Sixth Sense

IT'S BEEN TWO HOURS SINCE... SINCE...

IT SHOULDN'T BE TAKING HIM THIS LONG.

.....

TRY TO NAP.

THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO BE DWELLING ON.

.....

IT SHOULDN'T BE TAKING HIM THIS LONG!

W-WHAT IF...

.....

THEN YOU THINK HE... HE...

THEN ...

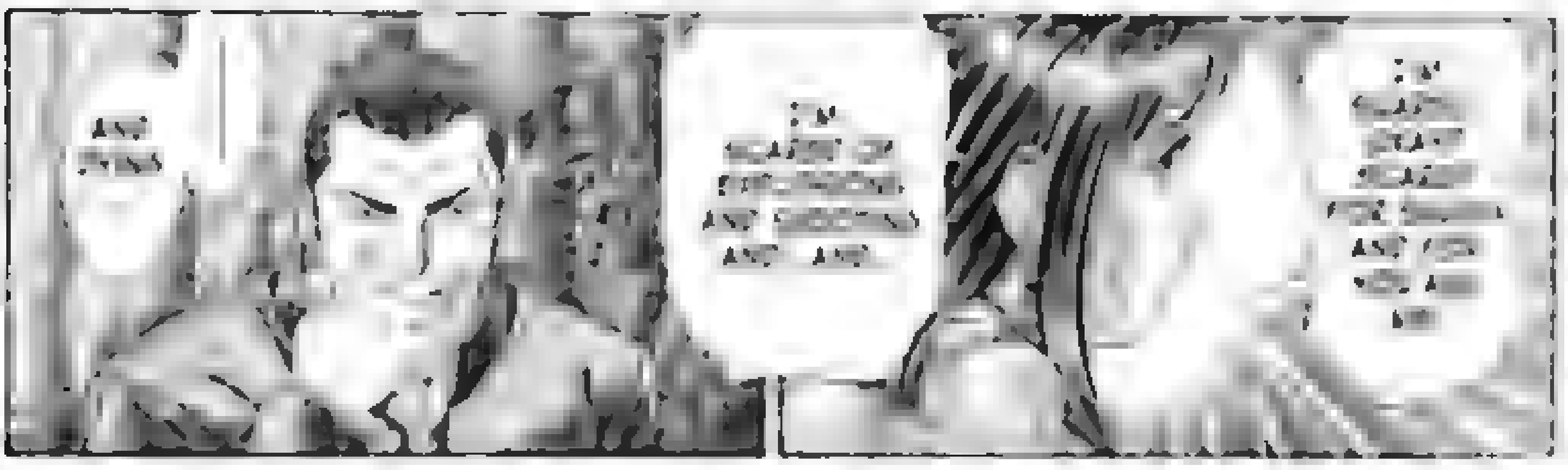
!!

NEXT HOME-ROOM'LL TELL ALL...

.....

WILDT

KNK



!!!

.....

YOU'RE NOT HELPING

.....

I'M TRYING HELP YOU

.....

I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE AND YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A CRAZY BITCH

PLEASE

I'M NOT CRAZY I'M NOT CRAZY

GODDAMN YOU, KARACA DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING?

.....

GET HER OUT OF HERE! NOW!

?

?

THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO

.....

SHUUYA BOLTED IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

WE BEEN HEARING A WHOLE LOT OF MACH-NE GUN FIRE. GOOD PORTION OF IT COMING FROM THE SAME DIRECTION AS THAT EXPLOSION.

!!

HE GOES TO INVES-TIGATE... SHU GOES TO GROUND

SO, KIRIYAMA'S HUNTING SHU WHEN THE BIG BANG GETS HIS ATTENTION...

AWAY FROM THE EXPLOSION SITE, NEAR'S I CAN FIGURE.

.....

IT FEELS ...

I DON'T THINK HE DID.

IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT. Y'KNOW?

NO...

WHAT IF HE KILLED SHUUYA FIRST?

BUT...

YOU'RE STILL WITH US

YOU WERE SHOT.

!!

WHAT IF HE'S BEEN SHOT WOUNDED WHAT IF

B-BUT WHAT IF...

.....

OH EX

SHE THINKS WE TO DO THE RIGHT THING THIS IS IT

NOTHING IS EVER 100 PERCENT

NO WAY

!!

!!

.....

MAKES SHUJYA'S MOVE BACK THERE PRETTY MUCH POINTLESS.

!!

WE CHARGE OFF HALF-COCKED, GET OURSELVES KILLED

THINK WITH YOUR HEAD, NOT YOUR HEART.

.....

!!

.....

!!

?

DO YOU BELIEVE IN IT OR NOT?! YES OR NO?

ANYTHING TO STOP THE GODDAMN STARING!

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH FINDING SHELLY?!

.....

YEAH.. BUT JUST A LITTLE

I GUESS

MAYBE

!!

.....

?

I THINK IT'S ALL PURE, GRADE-A BULLSHIT

NOPE

WHY? DO YOU BELIEVE IN IT?

...I CAN'T PROVE IT DOESN'T EXIST ANY MORE THAN YOU CAN.

THAT SAID...

I JUST... KNOW.

AND I'M NEVER WRONG. PERFECT RECORD, NORI.

SHUUYA'S ALIVE. I *KNOW* HE IS.

JUST LIKE I KNEW MISS KAKUFU'S CANCER WOULD GO INTO REMISSION.

SHUUYA'S OUT THERE. HE'S COMING BACK TO US. PERFECT RECORD, NORI...

.....

AND YET, I...

WHEN-EVER A PATIENT...

SIGH...

I'VE NEVER CALLED ONE WRONG. THERE, LAID IT OUT PLAIN.

DON'T MATTER HOW BAD IT IS.

HOW BAD THE PROGNOSIS IS... COULD BE THE PATIENT'S GONE TERMINAL. I ALWAYS KNOW THE ONES THAT'LL PULL THROUGH.

COMING BACK TO US...

.....

I WILL ...

YEAH

COUNT ON IT

...TAKE ONE LOOK AT THOSE RACCOON EYES AND START IN ON ME.

SHUUYA'S GONNA COME BACK...

NO BUTS!

NUH-UH!

NOW, ABOUT THAT NAP...

.....

...I'LL MAKE SURE HE WAKES UP THE PRINCESS WITH A KISS, EH? SOUND GOOD?

TELL YOU WHAT, SHUUYA SHOWS WHILE YOU'RE OUT

'KAY.....

THANK YOU...

SILLY.....

!!

SHOOO?

SO MUCH MORE GROUND TO COVER...

IF KIKIYAMA FINDS HER FIRST.

.....

SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY... GOT TO BE!

DON'T! DON'T THINK IT!

PING

P-PING

MITSUKO! MITSUKO'S STILL OUT THERE!

NO! NOT LIKE TAKAKO, DAMMIT!

P-PING

P-PING

P.
PUNG

KEE-YAH!

!!

CONT SHOOT! CEASE AND, CONT!!

!!

CONT SHOOT NO! CONT SHOOT!

BATTLE ROYALE 8

KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

ENGLISH ADAPTATION BY KEITH GIFFEN

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CHAPTER 57: Unfortunate

.....

NO ...

SHE TOLD ME...

...YOU KILLED HER!

NO ..

SHE ATTACKED ME! SHE WASN'T HERSELF!

I TRIED TO HELP HER...

SHE... SHE WASN'T HERSELF!

HE RAPED HER! NIIDA!

GASP

THE GUN WENT OFF! I...I...

IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE! I-I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

SHE KILLED NIIDA AND WANTED TO KILL ME!

TOO EASY

SOME PEOPLE JUST GIVE UP TOO EASY

SOME PEOPLE... THEY DON'T GET IT. YOU DO.

EVERYTHING I AM I OWE TO HER.

TO HER AMBITION AND HER DRIVE AND...AND.. DAMN YOU!

DAMN YOU FOR TAKING HER AWAY FROM ME!

I CHER-ISHED HER.

YOU... LOVED HER?

I'M NOT USUALLY SO CARELESS ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.

LIVE AND LEARN.

.....

ROYALLY SCREWED THAT ONE UP.

WELL... THERE YOU GO.

.....

LOVED HER

.....

WHAT?!

!!

!!

MITSU KNOWS LOVE YES, SHE DOES

KUH!

NEVER
YOU WANT...
NEVER
YOU WANT IT.

YOU'RE OAY. THAT IT? TAKA WAS THE BEARD? HMM?

YEAH. I KILLED YOUR PRECIOUS TAKAKO.

YOU DON'T GET IT YET, DO YOU?

BITCH? WHORE? SLUT? BEEN THERE, DONE THOSE.

?!

GET ...?

YOU

!!

CRAK

YOU'LL WHAT? SHOOT?

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH

HEY! NO FAST MOVES OR--

!!

BULL SHIT

.....

GOD! YOU ARE SO THICK!

JUST JUST CAN/

?!

WHILE MITSU ..BAD, BAD MITSU...TAKES EVERYTHING SHE CAN. SUCH A BAD GIRL...

YOU'RE NOT SHOOTING ANYBODY ARE YOU, SUSI, DEAR?

YOU CAN'T, CAN YOU? KIND, DEAR, SWEET SUSIMURA CAN'T TAKE A LIFE.

.....

OH, BUT YOU WILL. MITSU KNOWS.

I DON'T TAKE WHAT ISN'T MINE.

?!

YOU'LL CALL IT LOVE. YOU ALL DO.

I SWEAR TO GIVE YOUR LOVE... ALL THE WHILE TAKING AND TAKING...

ﾅｲ!!

YOU LOVED HER...TAKAKO. WHAT DID YOU TAKE FROM HER?

HMM?

.....

LOVE...

THAT'S NOT...

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

I WAS NINE WHEN IT STARTED...

.....

SHE SHOWED ME HOW TO...TO...

N-NOTHING! I...

FIRST TRUST...

THE TAKING...

NEW DADDIES ARE THE WORST. OH, YES...

THEY ALWAYS TAKE YOUR TRUST FIRST.

ALL TAKEN FOR LOVE.

ALL FOR LOVE.

TAKEN AWAY AND GONE FOREVER...

INNO-CENCE IS NEXT.

THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE BEFORE THEY TAKE!

THEN YOU'RE TAKING FIRST! YOU SEE?! THEN YOU'RE TAKING THE LOVE!

H-HH

H-HH

HE USED TO BEAT ME AFTER... I LEARNED TO TAKE IT!

HE...HE BEAT ME BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE BREASTS TO SQUEEZE.

OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER...

DEAR GOD!!

!!

!!

.....

I TOOK IT ALL BECAUSE I LOVED HIM.

AND I TOOK IT!

...

AND SPINDLY LEGS...

HOW DARE I NOT MATURE FASTER?!

DON'T .....

HE... LIKED THE WAY I... TASTED.

I THINK... I THINK HE WANTED TO...DRINK MY TEARS.

H-HH

HE LIKED IT WHEN I CRIED.

CHT

MITSUKO DON'T

!!

!!

HE LOVED ME!!

FUCK !!

SHE'S CRAZY. CERTIFIABLE. AND I LET HER GO..

KLIK

RIGHT... LIKE ANYONE COULD FOCUS PAST THAT PERFORMANCE.

LET MY GUARD DOWN STUPID

DAMN...

H

H

.....

!!

H

H-
HUH!

H-
HUH!

LOSE
FUCKS
SAKE

LOSE!
TOO
LOSE!

H-
HUH!

WH-?

ITH!

BUT
SOME
LUCKY
ASS
CAT

JUST
LIKE THEY
NEVER THINK
WE'LL TAKE
ADVANTAGE
FUCKERS!

FUCKIN'
THEY
NEVER
TAKE THE
TIME TO
FINISH
WHAT THEY
STARTED

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Ninth grade/Class B - Boy #18

TADAKATSU HATAGAMI

Ninth grade/Class B - Boy #13

YUICHIRO TAKIGUCHI

HH!

HH!

HH!

HH!

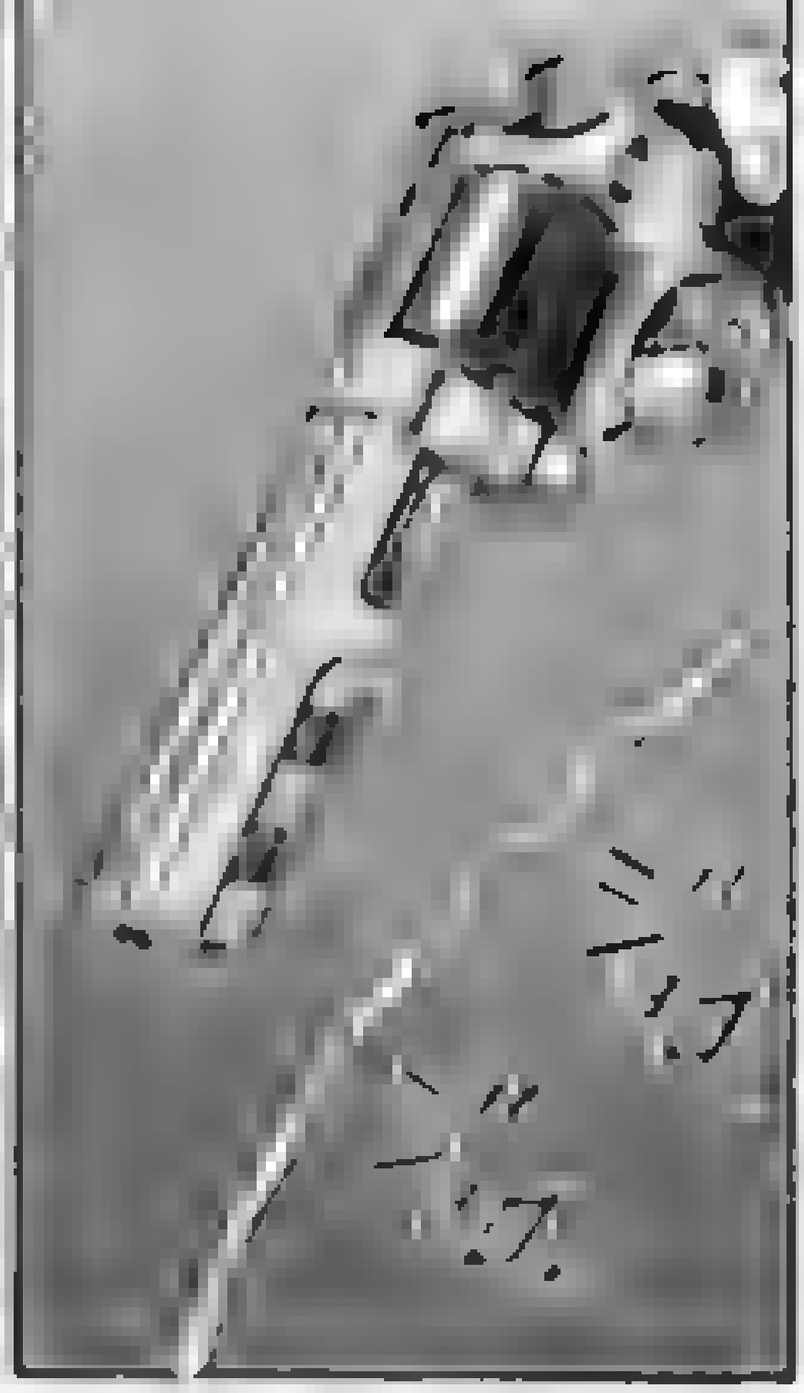
AND WE'VE GOT OTHER FRIENDS OUT THERE, TADAKATSU.

I THINK WE SHOULD TRY TRUSTING THEM, TOO. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

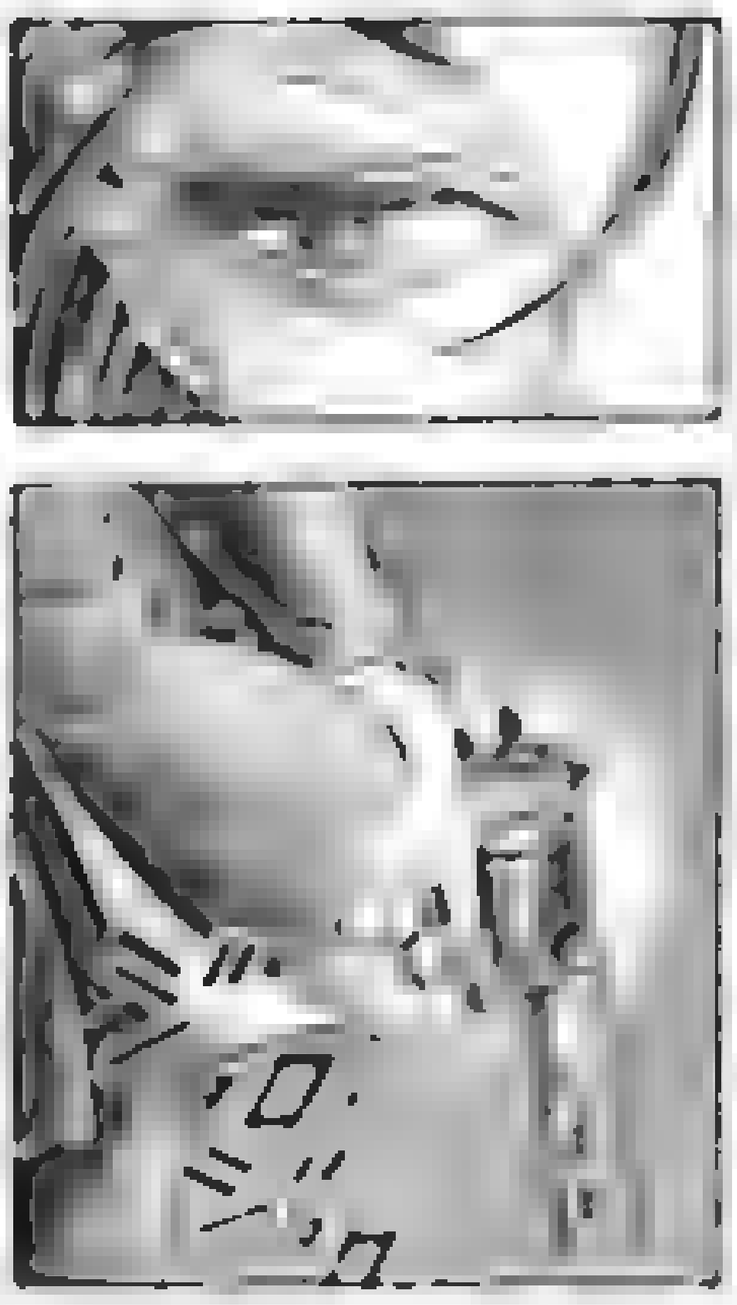
'SIDES... IT'S ALREADY "GAME OVER" WHEN YOU CAN'T TRUST YOUR BEST FRIEND.

CHAPTER 58: Liars

AAHH
"O."
"O."


"O."

CRIK


"O."

KATSU!!

NO! WAIT! SHE'S A G.I.!

TACARA'S! CONT! CONT!

YOU DON'T KNOW!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S BEEN THROUGH OUT THERE!

LOOK HOW SCARED SHE IS! YOU CAN'T.

WH-WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH--

SHE'S A G.I.?!

SHE COME AT ME WITH A SICKLE!

AIN'T YOU GOT EYES?!

SHE TRIED TO CUT MY GODDAMN HEAD OFF!

EEE

OMIGOD! I...I ALMOST... OMIGOD!

I DIDN'T KNOW!

I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE PLAYING! I...

YOU'RE NOT?

OMI-GOD!

GOO ...

!!

HUH? OH!

...THAT BUT I LOST M-MY BALANCE AND . AND...

I WAS TRYING TO GET AWAY BEFORE YOU FINISHED... UM...

IT WASN'T

I WASN'T TRYING TO ATTACK YOU! I WAS .

I

SO SCARED YOU JUST HAD TO TART YOURSELF UP LIKE SOME CHEAP SLUT?!

HOW FUCKIN' SCARED CAN YOU BE?!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR SCHOOL UN'FORM, HARDCORE?

BULLSH.IT! JUST LOOK AT YOU!

!!

HE RIPPED MY UNIFORM HE WANTED TO TO

I I WAS ATTACKED!

PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!

NO!

"TART"? DID HE JUST SAY "TART"?

DUMB-ASS, THICK-BACK JOCK!

GIMME A BREAK!

CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S TERRIFIED?

SHE'S IN THE SAME HELL WE ARE

SHE'S SHE'S

WAIT! RO, DON'T BELIEVE HER!

KATSU! STOP IT!

DO WE LOOK STUPID?! LYING BITCH!

NOBODY WANTS TO DO ANYTHING THEY'LL REGRET LATER, RIGHT?

SHOOT HER AND THERE'S NO TAKING IT BACK. THINK, KATSU.

WE'VE ALL GOT TO CALM DOWN, OKAY?

WHAT ?!

.....

!!

MY, MY

.....

HUH

INTERESTING DYNAMIC YOU'VE GOT AT WORK HERE, GUYS. PATHETIC, BUT INTERESTING.

THE ANIME GEEK GROWS A SET OF BALLS. VERY IMPRESSIVE, YUICHIRO.

BIG, DUMB AND PERPETUALLY HORNY... WHAT MORE CAN A GAL ASK?

BET I KNOW WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO DO...

ANIME GEEK'S ACTUALLY KINDA CUTE.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO WITH HER?

SHIT ...

I SAY WE

PLAN, ISN'T IT?

WELL...WE FOUND ONE.

HER THE

I MEAN, SHE

WE FELL ASLEEP IF SHE'D REALLY WANTED TO...

WE ARE LIKE, LIKE PROTECTIVE CUSTODY! THAT'LL DO IT!

SO WE JUST HEE ENOUGH NOT TO JUST HEE?

AND WE'E SAFE 'CAUSE WE KNOW WEE SHE IS AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT!

SHE'S THAT WAY SHE'S SAFE 'CAUSE SHE'S WITH US

!!

!!

BINGO!

YUCH RO, IT'S OKAY

!!

I'VE NEVER TOUCHED A GIRL BEFORE!

I SHE

.....

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?! JUST PAT HER DOWN!

I KNOW YOU WON'T TOUCH ME LIKE...LIKE OTHER BOYS DO.

I... I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE ANYMORE.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE SURE

I MEAN. I UNDER-STAND

SIGH ...

I'LL MAKE IT MEMORABLE. COUNT ON IT!

C'MON, LIL' GEEK... STROKE 'N POKE.

AH AH!!

CHECK UP UNDER HER SKIRT

JUST CHECK FOR HIDDEN WEAPONS! THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?!

CHRIST! I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO FEEL HER UP!

!!

HUH?! BETWEEN HER LEGS?!

I...I HID A KNIFE IN...IN MY PANTIES.

YES...

MITSU NO.....

!!

YUICHIRO!

NO WAY! THAT'S... HER *THING'S* UP THERE!

CUE THE TEARS

OH, GOD, JUST DO IT!

SHE'S *GOT* TO DEFEND HERSELF!

YOU HEARD HER! SOMEONE TRIED TO TO...

AND WE DON'T HAVE WEAPONS?!

THERE'S YOUR TRUST FOR YOU!

THERE YOU GO! HAH? HAH?

DON'T MIND HER, SHE'S JUST A BAD GIRL.

EVERYONE THINKS IT'S OKAY. MITSUKO THE BAD GIRL...

I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD WHAT THEY SAY. I KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.

STEADY, GIRL, DON'T OVERPLAY IT.

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?!

WHAT?!

!

YOU GET IT. WE WON'T LOOK--

NO, NO .. IT'S OKAY.

NO FUCKING WAY! CANNOT, YUICHIRO!

SHIT! OH, SHIT!

WE MADE HER CRY!

HUH

I'LL SAY!

YOU'RE NOT LIKE THEM.

IT'S OKAY

THIS IS ALMOST TOO EASY.

MITSU I

I TRUST YOU.

TAKE IT.

YUICHIRO ...

I THINK HE DOES IT FOR ME THE WHOLE BRAVE FRONT THING

TACAKATSU HE'S A LOT MORE SCARED THAN HE'LL ADMIT YEAH

WE'RE ALL SCARED SOME OF US MORE THAN OTHERS

HE'S REALLY A GOOD GUY HE'S JUST SCARED, Y'KNOW? HE WOULDN'T HAVE HURT YOU

チラッ。

HE'S NOT SWEET, LIKE YOU

HE TACA-KATSU SCARES ME

GOOD TO KNOW

スッ

YOU

YOU REALLY DO CARE, DON'T YOU?

HE ?!

I'M NOT THAT IS UM

YOU CARE. YOU REALLY DO. THAT TAKES SUCH... COURAGE TO CARE.

I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU

EASY FELLA!

EVEN NOW IN THESE CIRCUM-STANCES. THIS GANG

HEH

SHEESH YES SIR, MA'AM

IT DON'T FEEL LIKE WHEN I FOUND ME SO SWEET

I MEAN M-

GIRL OH

YES... TRUST...

ALWAYS TAKE THE TRUST FIRST.

I...

WE'VE G-GOT TO TRUST!

I TRUST YOU, YUICHIRO.

THAT'S RIGHT. DRINK IT IN, GEEK.

YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT COMING...

The Men Behind the Madness: An Interview with Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi

Editor: Takami-san, *Battle Royale* is based on your novel of the same name. What are your thoughts on the manga so far?

Koushun Takami: What I like is that I can read the original parts created by Taguchi-san without feeling they are out of place. For example, in Volume 3, you learn about Yoshimi Yahagi and Yoji Kuramoto. In my book, I never really explained how these two met, but in the comic we get to see this and it fits perfectly within the story. What I want to know is how Taguchi-san is able to do this, and do it so well each and every time. How do you do it?

Masayuki Taguchi: I think *Battle Royale* is a great novel. I've read it many times, not just for work, but also as a fan. What makes the Battle Royale novel so good is that there's a lot of variation in the characters. You look for a character that's like yourself and you experience the world of The Program along with that character. Many readers probably enjoy the series while thinking about how they would react in the same situation as the characters.

While working on the comic, I look for aspects of my own life to add to the series. For example, you remember the scene where the suicide couple goes shopping, right? (Editor's note: He's referring to Sakura Ogawa and Kazuhiko Yamamoto in *Volume 2*.) That's actually based on me. I place a lot of importance in buying the perfect gift for girls. The bag shown in that episode was a bag I bought my wife (laughs)

Takami: Really?

Taguchi: Anyway, when I started working on *Battle Royale*, I was thinking of ways I could write stuff from everyday life. For example, the suicide couple's relationship was written from a girl's point of view and was very pretty and platonic. However, with the Yahagi/Kuramoto couple in volume 3, I told the story from the guy's side. The first time you ever make love to a girl, the girl seems like an alien and you start worrying about what to do. It was like that for you, right? That's what I was going for. If I'm making it into a comic then I thought it wouldn't be any good unless I could insert details like that. If all the characters were presented exactly how they were in the book, then you might as well read the novel. There'd be no point in writing a manga. With the manga, you gain insight into what makes the characters tick. I love *Battle Royale* from the bottom of my heart.

Takami: Thank you very much.

Taguchi: I've really studied the way you've arranged the characters in your novel, Takami-san. Anyone could die at any time, but how people meet, who dies.. everything is set up so well.

You've arranged your characters like chess pieces, and because of this I can move the characters around while thinking, "Well, he's a pawn and he's a knight, so they should do this." You can see how to move the story along to make each piece come alive.

Editor: Takami-san, how did you come up with the various roles, organize them, and decide the order in which they were going to die?

Takami: I didn't think much about that. I decided Shuuya Nanahara was going to be the main character and just had the other characters get involved with him as he advanced. For example, when the game starts and he leaves the school, Shuuya is immediately attacked by this large boy named Yoshio Akamatsu. I knew the main character needed to see some sort of action the moment he leaves the school. Basically, he needed to be attacked, so I had to decide what kind of character would do something like that. It would have to be someone fairly unsure of himself, so I made Akamatsu a weak and insecure guy. That's how I decided that. I'm making things up as I go along, but I've already worked out what the main character will do.

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CHAPTER 59: Soap Opera

YOU GAVE YOUR WEAPON TO TACAELA'S...?! WILLINGLY?!

THE GUN WAS YOUR WEAPON?

TO YOU? THE GUN...

...

YEAH

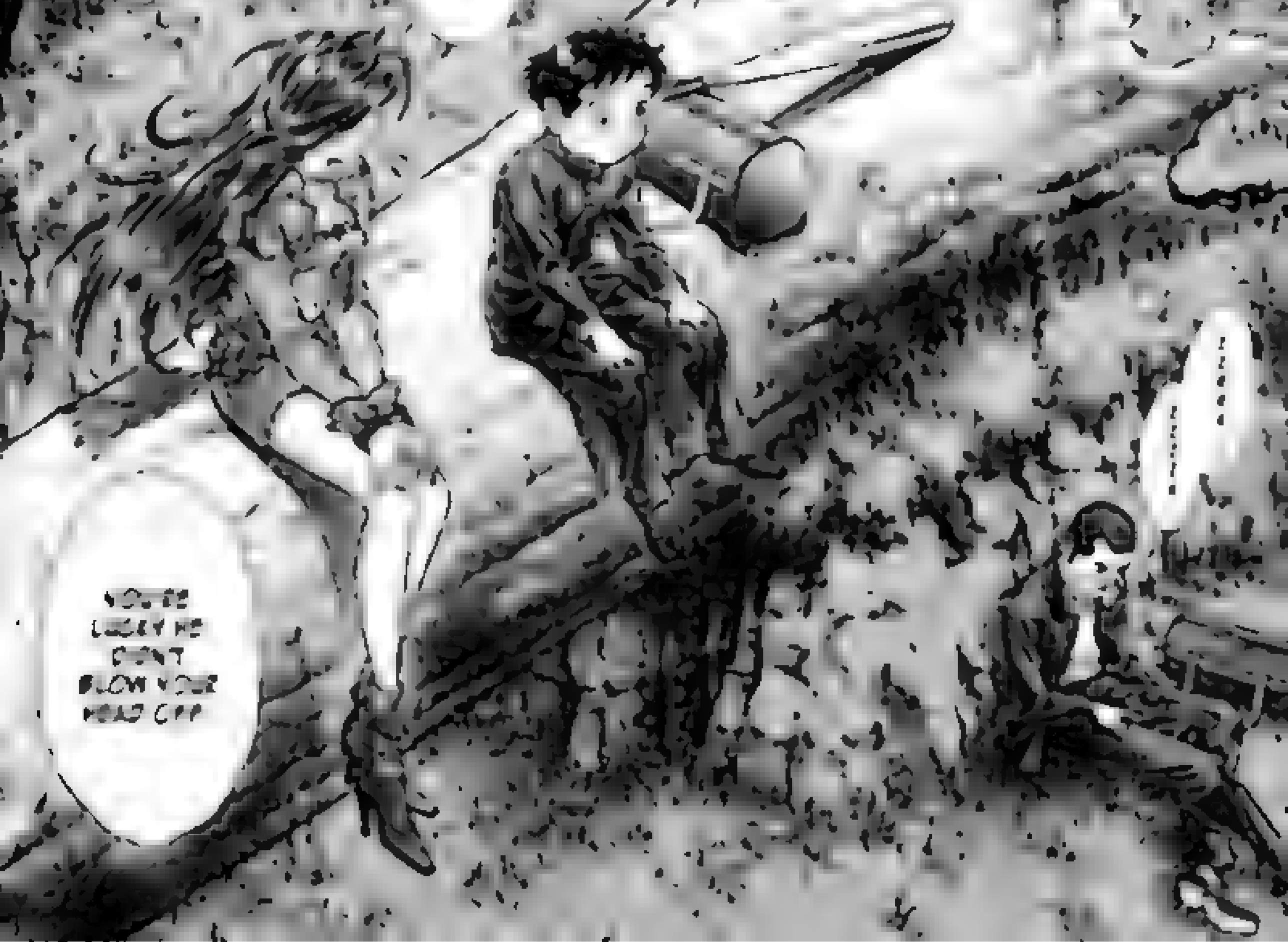
...

I TRUST HIM

WE GO BACK A WAYS

THAT'S A STAND-UP KNOCA GUY YEAH

.....



WHAT HAVE I GOT TO OFFER? ME? WITH A GUN?

NOT REALLY. BUT THEN...

.....

SO CER-TAIN?

NO NOT TADAKATSU.

I GUESS. .

.....

GUYS LIKE ME... NAH.

I MEAN... I AM GONNA DIE...

...SOONER OR LATER. I JUST HOPE IT HITS QUICK. BANG! GONE! LIKE THAT.

BEST I CAN HOPE FOR'S...

...THAT IT DOESN'T HURT TOO MUCH, Y'KNOW?

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

THAT'S ALMOST ZEN-LIKE. BUT REALLY...

.....

I MEAN, LOOK AT ME! SHEE...

I SEE.....

NO WAY I LIKE THAT

AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T HURT

GUYS, IF WE WERE PRETTY CAST FRIENDS

TASH OR SHAYS

?!

SHAYNERA

THOSE GUYS THEY GOT IT GOING' RED LIKE!

OR MANERA OR SHAYNERA THEN IT'D BE DIFFERENT NOW BE!

HOW, IF I NEED LIKE SHE

SHA-!!

SHAYNERA

AND SHAYNERA GOT THE NOTES!

TASH AND SHAYNERA

SHAYNERA NEED ANYONE

I'M NOWHERE NEAR THEIR LEAGUE.

I'M NOT MUCH GOOD PAST ANIME TALK.

STILL

...YOU CAN'T HELP BUT ADMIRE THEM!

UH-HUH

THEY'RE LIKE THE THREE MUSKETEERS

YOU SEE HOW THEY STOOD UP TO THAT YONEMI GUY? BACK AT THE SCHOOL?

This page was originally planned as it's prime example of Ryoko's high quality. Well... at least I managed to guess what the missing letters were

IS THAT SO?

.....

ANYONE MESSES WITH HIM'S GONNA LIVE TO REGRET IT!

THEN THERE'S SUO MURA MAN!

AND SMART? NEAR GENIUS FROM WHAT I HEARD!

...OFF THE B-BALL COURT AS WELL AS ON!

YOU DO MIMURA SHOOT MOVES

YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT!

.....

DON'T GET ME WRONG. THERE'S GIRLS, TOO!

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?!

AND SHUUYA... WHO DOESN'T LIKE SHUUYA?

HE'S GOT IT ALL!

AND NORIKO! SHE WAS RIGHT IN THE THICK OF IT BACK AT THE SCHOOL!

YUKIE AND HER BUNCH...

HELP HIM... YOSHITOKI.. PLEASE HELP...

MITSU ?

OUT THERE...

.....

THERE YOU HAVE IT!

YEAH

THEY'RE OUT THERE

WE CAN TRUST ANY OF THEM TO DO RIGHT.

NO! THAT'S NOT WHAT I

HUH ?!

I COULDN'T HELP NOTICING MY NAME WASN'T THERE SMALL SURPRISE

MY LIFE STORY

WAY TO GO, GECK

WAY TO LET ME KNOW WHERE I STAND

I WISH YOU COULD TRUST ME, WHICH IS REALLY SO

I'VE NEVER DONE MUCH TO MAKE PEOPLE TRUST ME IT'S MY FAULT

OKAY

IT'S JUST YOU'VE NEVER I DON'T KNOW

NO YOU'RE I DON'T MEAN

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT PEOPLE SAY NOT REALLY SITUATIONS LIKE THIS IT'S WHAT YOU DO THAT COUNTS! ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

I CAN! I WILL! YOU'LL SEE!

.....

YOU TOLD US, MITSU

!!

YOU'LL SEE! KATSU'LL WAKE UP AND THAT BELT WILL COME RIGHT OFF! YOU'LL SEE!

YOU TOLD US ABOUT THE KNIFE! THAT COUNTS! THAT SHOWED TRUST!

.....

.....

THAT'S NOT...

.....

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE NEAR AS BAD AS PEOPLE SAY. PEOPLE SAID HORRIBLE THINGS ABOUT MEGUMI'S SISTER, TOO!

THEY'RE NOT ALL LIES, YUICHIRO.

ALL LIES!

.....

...YOUR EYES LOOK SO HARD. SCARY...

Y'KNOW, SOMETIMES WHEN I SEE YOU...

I SUP- POSE. SAD...

SOMETIMES... SOMETIMES ONLY SAD.

...BUT ALWAYS SAD...

.....

!

MY EYES?

.....

MY EYES? YOU NOTICE MY EYES?

YOU NOTICE?

.....

YEAH... SO SAD AND CARING AND... AND...TRUSTING. LIKE YOU'RE... LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.

!!

I THINK MAYBE YOU'RE LOST. AND LOST PEOPLE... SOMETIMES THEY DO BAD THINGS.

I DON'T THINK REALLY BAD PEOPLE...

I DON'T THINK THEIR EYES CAN *EVER* LOOK THAT WAY. SO I DON'T THINK YOU'RE ALL THAT BAD.

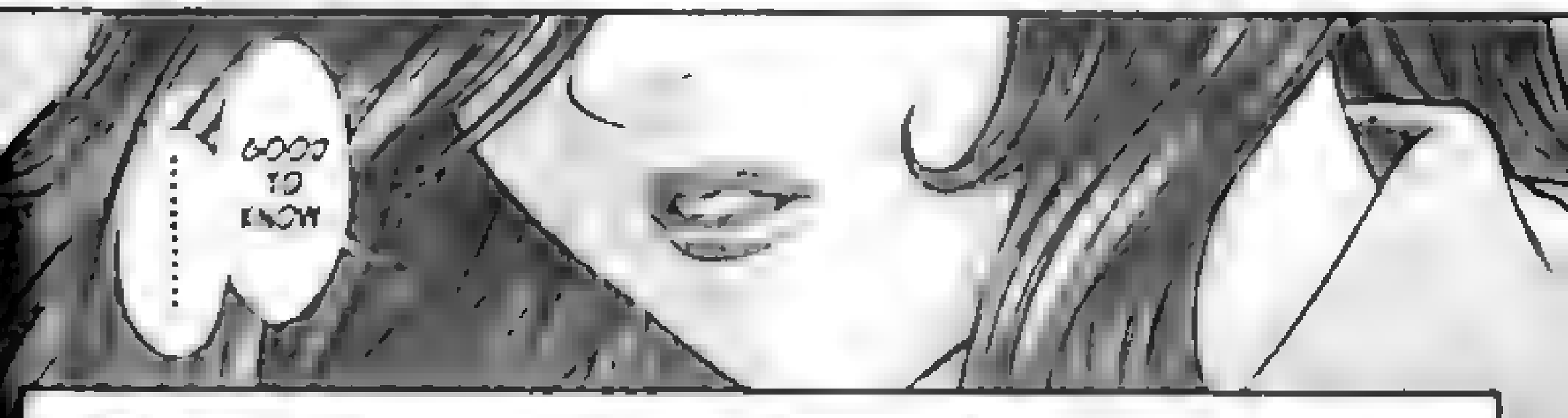
I HOPE YOU FIND WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, MITSU. I REALLY DO.

.....

AND LOST PEOPLE... SOMETIMES THEY DO BAD THINGS.

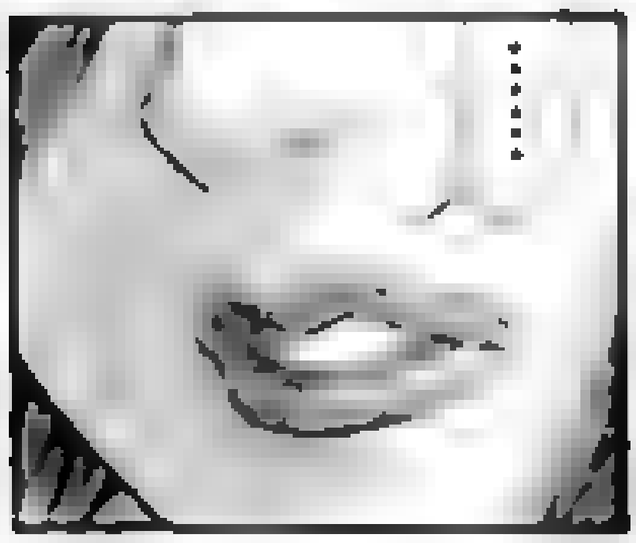
.....

HE'S TAKING OUR TRUST!


IT GOOD TO KNOW
.....

YOU MUST BE THIRSTY AFTER ALL ALL THIS
I AM SUCH A DORK! HERE
HERE TAKE IT

YOU LOST ALL YOUR STUFF, RIGHT?
ALMOST OH! FORGOT
!!


.....

WE GOT PLENTY

CHECK OUT ME NOW

HUH

.....

.....

'ATTA BOY. RUN INTO IT CAMSEL IN DISTRESS LIT

COME A LITTLE BIT CLOSER AND LET ME SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE

YES SI. REMEMBER

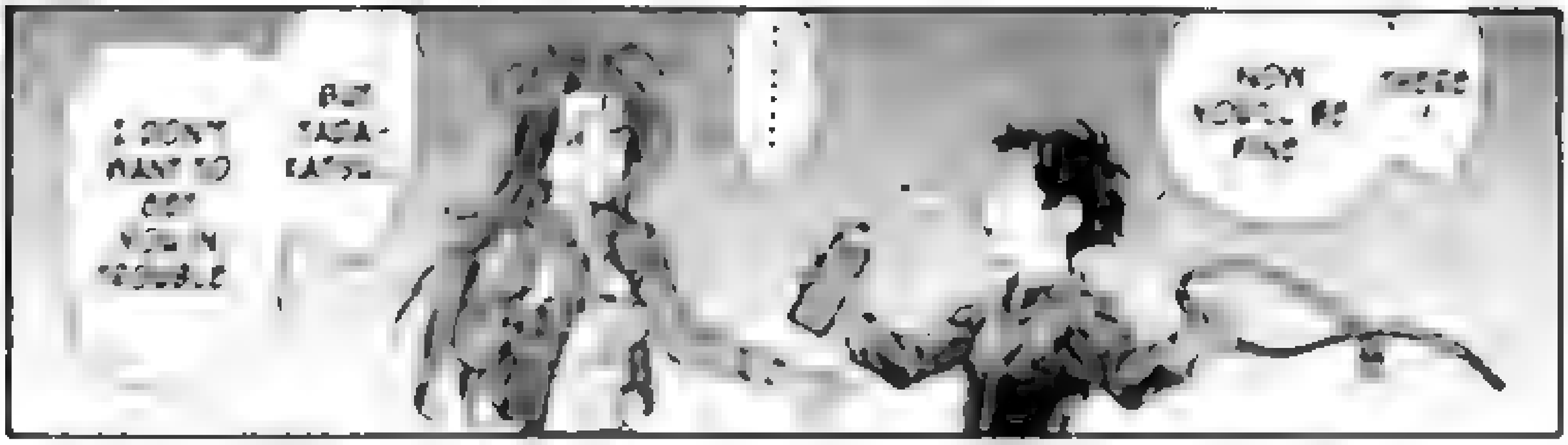
I'M GOING TO NEED A HAND

THANKS, BUT

THAT'S THE WAY

!!

ZHI...


I DON'T WANT TO GET YOU IN TROUBLE
BUT YAGA-
NOW YOU'LL BE FINE
THERE

F-
FRIEND
?

YOU DON'T TO UP PEOPLE YOU TRUST
AND YOU DON'T EVER TO UP A FRIEND

!!

!!

!
DON'T COME WITH YUICHIRO. I'M NO SOFT TOUCH
ASK ME IF I CARE

AND SUCH A CUTIE HOW COULD I HAVE MISSED THAT?

DO YOU... DO YOU THINK HE COULD EVER .. Y'KNOW. IF WE GET OUT OF HERE

MMM.. SUCH A SWEET-HEART

LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T FEED THE BEAST

GET THIS PARTY STARTED!

PUT A SOCK IN IT, F'CHRIS-SAKE!

ALRIGHT ALREADY!

WHEN HE TOUCHED ME .SO GENTLE... S.SH ..

STOP IT!

I THINK HE'D BE GOOD FOR ME, DON'T YOU?

NOW SHUT THE FUCK UP OR I'LL BAG YOU!

FINE! I HATE YOU THAT M_CH!

LIKE YOU REALLY GIVE A SHIT!

THIS ONE'S GONNA BE FUN.

TOO EASY

?

WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?!

WHY ARE YOU BEING SO MEAN?! DO YOU HATE ME THAT MUCH?!

!!

AT LEAST I'M TRYING

ALL YOU DO IS YELL AND AND ACT ALL MEAN

WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN TO ME

I GUESS THEY CALL YOU MAD BECAUSE SOMEONE TOOK A PUNCH AT YOU

YOU DON'T KNOW WHY YOU? WHY I CHOSE YOU TO TO

I CHOSE YOU!

WHY? WHY?

NOW CAN BECAUSE YOU'RE A NO-ACCOUNT SCANK NO

!!

!!

AM I THAT HORRIBLE? I THOUGHT YOU WERE NICE. PLEASE...

.....

I FOUND YOU.

WH-WHUH?

'ATTA BOY...

PLEASE... PLEASE BE NICE.

LOCK ONTO THEM... YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO.

UH-UH-UMN...

THEY ALL TASTE THE SAME.

THE SAME...

MUSKY LUST AND COPPERY FEAR...

MMM... SO NICE..

ALWAYS DADDY'S GIRL!

MAKE IT NICE!

!!

DADDY'S GIRL!

The Men Behind the Madness: An Interview with Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi (Part 2)

Editor: That's interesting advice for all the writers out there. Usually everything is planned ahead.

Takami: People who have read the book already know what fans of the manga are discovering: my main character really doesn't do much! (laughs) He doesn't do much, but he's the character that carries the story to the end.

Editor: Taguchi-san was talking about characters earlier, but Takami-san, what kind of character is Shuuya to you?

Takami: I can't really explain his character. Fans have told me that *Battle Royale*'s characters coincide with those in Lupin III. I really like Lupin, so it may be true. (laughs) If you match them up, then Shinji Mimura is Lupin, Hiroki Sugimura is Goemon and Shogo Kawada is Jigen. But then who is Shuuya? Nobody knows...

Taguchi: How about a pleasant Zenigata? (laughs) Maybe a cool, non-stinking Zenigata? He resembles Zenigata with sweat shining on his face. Kind of.

Editor: Then Mitsuko is Fujiko?

Takami: Yes. Yes.

Taguchi: So would that make Noriko Clarise?

Takami: That may be.

Editor: Taguchi-san, you have both Kawada and Sugimura refer to Shuuya as being "naïve" and a "goodie-goodie," is that how you see Shuuya?

Taguchi: It's a simple way of expressing Shuuya's central philosophy. I've written Shuuya as a really moral person who understands and is sensitive to the pain of others. Kawada, on the other hand, is more adult. He's been around the block a few times and knows that logic doesn't always work. He's like an adult version of Shuuya. Mimura is smarter and more relaxed than Shuuya. That makes it seem like he's belittling people a lot of times, so he's a more difficult character to trust. Noriko is basically there to show how Shuuya is a good guy, and I found myself wondering what to do with her. Shuuya is a stupid, passionate goodie-goodie who doesn't think ahead so I figured Noriko could act kind of nice and normal.

Takami: I see. In my book, Nanahara has more of a sour side, too. He's the most passionate character in my book. Giving him that sort of personality helps the story flow a little better.

Editor: In Volume 4, you have a fight between Kazushi Niida and Takako Chigusa. The scene where Kazushi punches Takako is very disturbing.

Taguchi: Yes, that isn't a normal human expression, is it?

Takami: What do you mean?

Taguchi: His eyes are angry, his eyebrows are laughing, and his mouth is kind of strange. But an expression like that just isn't possible, right? His eyes are angry, but his eyebrows are up high. It's not a realistic expression, but I thought it would be scary.

Takami: How do you draw an expression like that?

Taguchi: At night, I draw while looking at my face in the mirror.

Takami: That scene where Kazushi keeps punching Takako over and over is incredible.

Taguchi: It's horrible seeing a girl get beat up like that, isn't it?

Takami: When I said it was "incredible," I didn't mean it in an evil way. I just meant that I admire the art. I was trying to think whether I'd be able to express that in words, but I don't think I could do it. Whether it's insanity or murderous rage, you can really feel it in your panels.

Taguchi: What I really like about having someone else write the manga is that the story is already taken care of, so I can just focus on the characters. I remember that when I first spoke with you, Takami-san, you told me to think up nice faces for all of the characters.

Takami: I said that?

Taguchi: You told me to think about how there were no real villains in Class B, and that if this hadn't happened, each student would have had their own happy future.

Takami: I didn't need to tell you that, right? (laughs)

Taguchi: I realized it then. No kids in this story are simply evil. Even those that seem evil could have been good if things had gone differently.

Takami: But I myself believe that evil people are evil. (laughs)

Taguchi: Like Kazushi Niida. The way he beat up Takako, I'd say he's simply evil. (laughs)

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WHAT AM I DOING?! HARDCORE SOUMA! THIS CAN'T...

SO SOFT... SO SOFT...

CHAPTER 60: Allure

DIDN'T EVEN WANNA GO. WHO KNEW?

ALWAYS "HURRY, HURRY"!

ALWAYS A LAST-MINUTE RUSH WITH YOU!

WHO KNEW? WHO KNEW?

U' WANNA CUT ME A BREAK HERE, MA?

DREAMT ABOUT DOING IT. WHO HASN'T?

?!

HATE WAKING UP FROM THOSE DREAMS.

SOFT...

!!

S'ALWAYS SOUMA... SO SOFT...

FORTY-TWO COMPETE UNTIL ONLY ONE REMAINS.

BASIC SUBTRACTION, CLASS. FORTY-TWO MINUS FORTY-ONE...

!!

ALWAYS THE LAST TO KNOW.

HOH!

SOUMA. WHO KNEW?

GAVE ME A BAT.

NO

NO!

AKAMATSU? HEY, AKAMATSU!

ME 'N SOUMA! CHECK IT OUT!

NOOOOO!

CHECK IT OUT!

HNN

MAYA JEALOUS OF ME 'N SCENA

EVERYONE'S SCARED'A NASTUCKE SCENA

SCARED'A NASTUCKE

NOT YUICHI SAID SHE WAS SOFT

SAID SHE WAS NICE

KAISU! HERE!

HUH

STAY BACK OR OR

NO!

KATSU

SHE SAID SHE HAS A GUN INSIDE

AHH!

NICE AND SOFT INSIDE

I'M NOT LOOK!

.....

YOU'RE UH SURE ABOUT THIS?

GUN... WHERE'S THE GUN AT?

BOOO

I... I... JUST CAN'T

LOOK! TAKE IT.

YEAH

IT'S BETTER OFF WITH YOU, DON'T YOU THINK? I WAS NEVER GOOD AT GAMES.

AHH!

POSTIVE I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE SAFETY

AND WE'VE GOT OTHER FRIENDS OUT THERE, TADAKATSU. I THINK WE SHOULD TRY TRUSTING THEM, TOO.

'SIDES... IT'S ALREADY "GAME OVER" WHEN YOU CAN'T TRUST YOUR BEST FRIEND.

NAME ONE TIME I EVER BEAT YOU AT ANYTH NO.

SO SOFT

SO NICE

WHAT DO YOU SAY? WON'T THEY BE SURPRISED?

WON'T THEY BE SURPRISED TO KNOW YOU NAILED HARDCORE SOUMA? HELL, YES!

YOU CALLED IT, YUICHIRO. SHE IS NICE.

WHO KNEW?

!!

N

N-

H.V.N

I WISH YOU COULD TRUST ME

I REALLY DO.

YEAH. THOUGHT SHE WANTED YOU, DIDN'T YOU?

BE NICE. PLEASE BE NICE.

LOOK... ALL FOR YOU.

THIS... HOW? AHH, GOD THIS IS WRONG!

OH, MY GOD...

GOD...

THIS CAN'T BE...

THIS CAN'T BE! CAN'T!!

TOUCH ME...

T-TOUCH...

OMIGOD! OMIGOD SHE'S STRIPPING! OH...MY... GOD!

MM...

KATSU...

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WANT ME!

I'VE GOT BREASTS NOW! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WANT ME!

MITSU

AH...

AH...

I ALWAYS HAVE.

GOD KNOWS I DO.

I DO.

THIS...

I'VE DREAMT THIS.

CAN'T...

TOO... TOO CRA -AZY...

!!

ALWAYS A TEASE...

YOU SETTLIN' IN FOR TH' NIGHT?

YO, TADA-KATSU!

SLUT.

ALWAYS A DISTRACTION...

JUST...

JUST LIKE THIS.

ALWAYS A NEED FOR RELEASE

HER ALL SWEATY SLICK READY

SLIPPIN' IT BETWEEN

I KNOW YOU DO'

I KNOW YOU LIKE IT

SHE

HUH.

LIKE

SHE WANTS IT.

LIKE IT..

GONNA DO YOU! GONNA DO YOU RIGHT HERE!

GONNA RIDE YOU BAREBACK, TRAMP! SEE IF I DON'T!

NO MORE!

ALWAYS TEASING!

SLUT!

.....

DADDY'S GIRL...

♡

I TOLD YOU!

I TOLD YOU YOU'D LIKE ME!

YEAH!

YOU LOVE IT!

YOU LIKE THIS?!

MAKE ME LIKE IT! MAKE ME LIKE IT!

YES!

YOU'RE KILLING ME!

HUH... TYPICAL JOCK. NO FUCKING FINESSE. UH-OH!

.....

NOT SO ROUGH

IT'S OKAY

NOT SO ROUGH, 'KAY?

WH

I-I DON'T I

I'M ALL BUT STARK NAKED AND HE GOES FOR THE COLLAR. ASSHOLE!

MM.

LESS ROUGH.. PROMISE.. HMMMNGH...

GASP!

YEAH GAVE UP THE KNIFE AND ACCEPT THE OUTCOME.

OKAY, MAYBE NOT THE ANGLE OUT BUT S—

YOU TAKE THE KNIFE AND I TAKE CONTROL.

GO AHEAD, GEEK

AHH AHH, JEEZ

AND I DIDN'T NEED MUCH...

skit

BOUGHT ME THE "TRUST" I NEEDED

THEM'S THE BREAKS, MITSU.

GH- HUH...

FUCKER'S GONNA BLEED ALL OVER ME.

JUST ENOUGH TO KEEP A SECRET.

ASSHOLE ALMOST FELT IT OUT.

AND YOU THOUGHT I WAS MEAN BEFORE...

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LET'S GO! LET'S GO! COME UP FOR AIR ALREADY!

LAST THING I NEED'S YOU BITING OFF MY TONGUE WHEN YOU CLENCH.

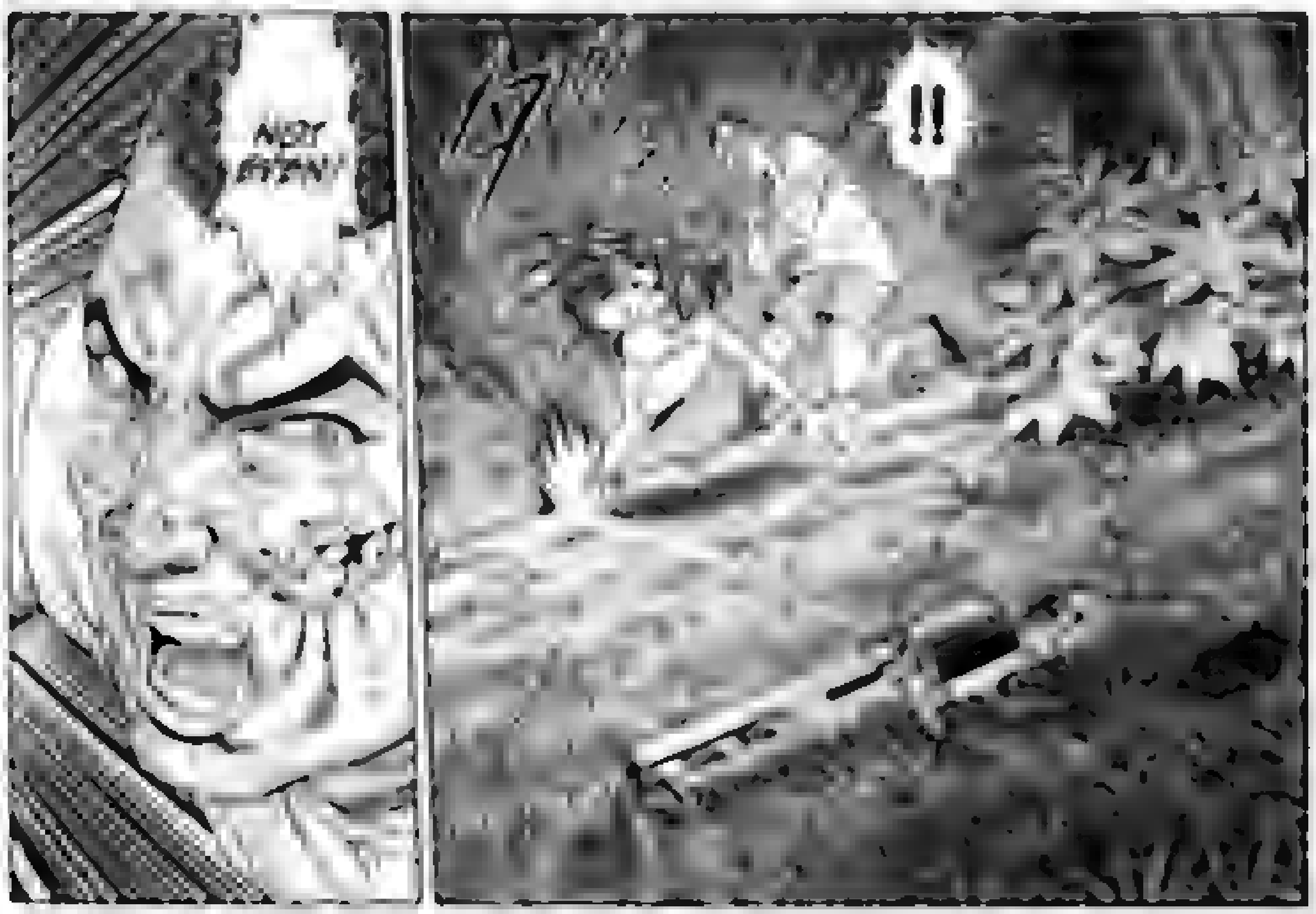
Hyyy..

!!

CHAPTER 61: Sorceress and Bullet

!!

SHUT
CUT ALL
FUCKING
BITCH!


ALL
RIGHT!
!!

DEAD!
YOU ARE SO
FUCKING
COLD!!

!!

!!

HH!
MITSU
?!

!!

BITCH...

PLAY ME LIKE THAT.

NOBODY PLAYS ME LIKE THAT!

FUCK!!

FUCKING PIECE'A SHIT, LOWLIFE WHORE!

I SAID MOVE AWAY, YUICHIRO! THIS TIME SHE GETS WHAT'S COMING TO HER!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WHAT HAPPENED?! WHY ARE THE TWO OF YOU?

KA'S...?

SAID HE'D SHOOT ME IF I DIDN'T

HE MADE ME TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF AND AND

!!

NO! NO HE TRIED TO RAPE ME!

THIS

THIS

THIS BITCH TRIED TO KILL ME! AGAIN!

TRIED TO SLIT MY F--KIN' THROAT! NOW MOVE AWAY!

CAME ON TO ME ALL HOT 'N BOTHERED...

LIAR, KATSU?

SHE'S LYING THROUGH HER TEETH!

THAT'S YOU CAN'T

.....

HE TRIED TO PUT HIS THING IN ME!

STRIPPED DOWN 'N CLIMBED ALL OVER ME!

SOON'S I BOUGHT IN, SLASHED ME WITH A RAZOR!

WHERE DO YOU THINK THIS CAME FROM?! BITCH PLAYED ME!

LOOK!

.....

LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT THE RED MARKS HE LEFT! HE HURT ME, YUICHIRO!

I HAD TO! HE WOULDN'T STOP!

HE WAS HURTING ME! I...

NO! I SCRATCHED HIM!

!!

!!

!!

!
NO
I
I DON'T
CAN
"-A"
ALICIA
SUSTEN
I'M A
FRIEND
EAT SHIT!
EAT
CAN'T
WHAT
THE
FUCK IS
"-A"
I DON'T
WANT
THIS CUNT
"-A" !
I'LL
CAN'T
FUCK
I DON'T WANT THIS CUNT "-A" !
I'LL EAT YOUR CUNT !
I DON'T WANT THIS CUNT "-A" BEFORE--
I'LL EAT YOUR CUNT !
I DON'T WANT THIS CUNT "-A" BEFORE--
I'LL EAT YOUR CUNT !
NOW LOOK
ALL THE
MOVIES ON
YOU!
WHERE
FRIENDS
THEY ARE
YOU CAN'T
EAT'S
EAT!
!!
ENGLISH!!
.....

.....

GIVE ME THE GUN AND WE'LL WORK THINGS OUT.

GIVE ME THE GUN. NOT A PROBLEM IF YOU'RE NOT LYING.

HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST ME?

YOUR CALL

YUICHIRO ...

SHE'S A CANCER.

DAMN ...

.....

YEAH.

IT'S BETTER OFF WITH YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?

I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE SAFETY.

SHE'S A CANCER, YUICHIRO.

.....

JUST HEAR ME OUT FIRST

IT'S NOT US I'M WORRIED ABOUT

YEAH

WE OKAY?

!

!

HARDCORE GONNA SHE EARNED THE NAME YOU WITH ME?

YOU.

SOMETIMES YOU'RE TOO KIND FOR YOUR OWN GOOD OUT HERE, THAT GETS YOU KILLED.

BUT KNOW THIS... ONCE I'M PROVEN RIGHT...

SHE'S HISTORY

I DON'T THINK SO.

AND I THINK THAT'S A GOOD THING, Y'KNOW?

.....

YEAH.

WITH YOU ALL THE WAY.

.....

UH..

SURE.

!!

FFF.

HMH...

WHAT'S SHE SO FIXED ON?

?!

HUH?

SORRY, YUICHIRO. IT JUST WON'T WORK. SHE WON'T LET IT.

CAUGHT YOU AT IT, BITCH.

.....

GOD KNOWS SHE'S GOT IT COMING.

!!

I END IT HERE.

.....

FFF

!!

YEAH...
I SAW.

!!

VUICHIRO...
NO!

BATTLE ROYALE

The Men Behind the Madness: An Interview with Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi (Part 3)

Editor: There are a lot of fans who draw parallels between *Battle Royale* and the problems with our education system. For example, they compare the totalitarian state that created "The Program" to strict school regulations and pressure from teachers. When you wrote the story, Takami-san, did you think of it that way?

Takami: I do get a lot of letters expressing that opinion, but I didn't really think of it as a comparison. It's hard to explain, but I've always hated totalitarian organizations and evil practices like the System. Looking back, it might be due to the rules I had to follow in middle school. Maybe it's because I lived in the country, but the rules were unbelievable. I suppose if you dig really deep that it could be about educational problems.

Editor. So it's more like it worked its way into the story.

Takami: Yeah. When I thought about what conditions could believably spawn a death game like "The Program," a totalitarian government was an obvious choice. So that world was something that came after, when I was wondering how to make the narrative work. It doesn't really have much to do with the story's core.

Editor: Taguchi-san, in the afterword for Volume 2, you said something about living honestly, didn't you?

Taguchi: Personally, I don't think of the story being so much about school and totalitarianism, but more like how to live. I think the most important thing is to live honestly and with hope, no matter when or where you are. In the afterword for Volume 2, Takami-san said something to the effect of "it's good to have hope." And I couldn't agree with him more. While I'm drawing the manga, I'm always making sure I don't draw anything that goes against that belief.

Editor: So is that your policy for life, Taguchi-san?

Taguchi: I think we should always be thinking of ways we can live more honestly. Although there are times that even I can't help having a drink and complaining about life. (laughs) But that's the principle thing.

Takami: Yeah, I couldn't help noticing the positive themes in Taguchi-san's other works, like *Baron Gong Battle*. Of course, you can always create stories by writing about negative things, but I like to read books that are light and optimistic. That may mean I read a lot of "hero novels" and "hero manga," but I find it more fun to write and to read thinking, "I want it to be like this."

Editor: The students in *Battle Royale* are in a desperate, negative situation, but the overall message is one of living positively, right?

Takami: This may be a little off the subject, but an impression I got from some of the fan letters I've received is that the characters in *Battle Royale* seem so happy that they're jealous. These are letters from hard-working middle and high school students.

Editor: What gave you that impression?

Taguchi: I think I understand. Of course, the students don't want to die, but they know they're going to be killed, and because the situation is so clear-cut for them, they're able to live life to the fullest. I think real life is a lot less clear. Problems get complicated and you get so lost trying to figure out what to do that you finally start feeling like you can't move. I think the people who wrote those letters probably felt something like that.

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CHAPTER 62: Split Personalities

NO..

NOT FOR HER!

CH

NOT FOR HER! YUICHIRO! WH-WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

.....

WHY DID YOU... I...

YUICHIRO!

I COULDN'T... YOU YUICHIRO!

I... AHH, GOD!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO! YUICHIRO? I-I-I DON'T KNOW--

WH-HUH?

H-HK!

NO...

.....

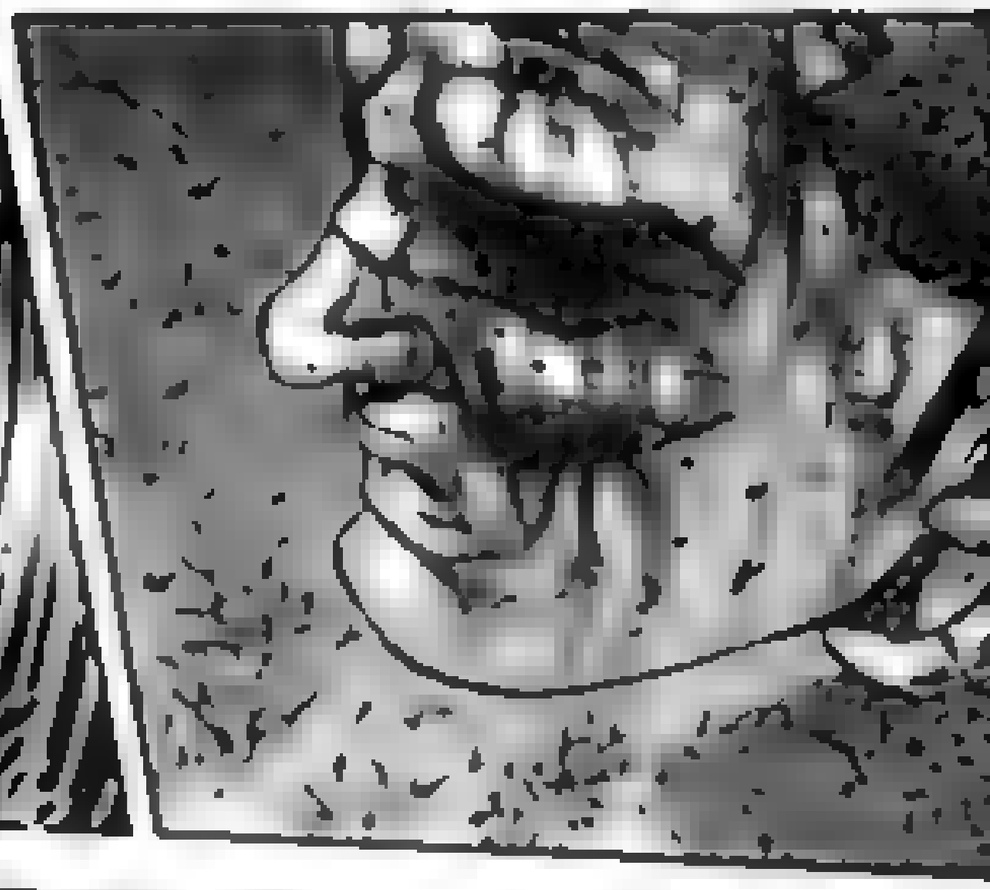
I...

COM'N...
VU!...

NO...
NOT..

IT'S BETTER OFF WITH YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?

YEAH



!!

M-M-
MITSU
HURTS

.....

MITSU...
HURTS...

MIT

.....

IT'S
SUP-
POSED
TO.

HI.

.....

NO NO GET KA'SU

O-OET KA'SU

KA'SU

.....

THE TWO OF YOU WON BLOOD "OBTHER

YOU'RE ALL THE SAME

.....

I'LL TAKE YOU TO HIM

YOUR EYES

SOUL EATER TAKES ALL OF YOU THE SAME

MY WEAPON!

12

NOT SAD...

NO SAD EYES FOR ME...

SEE...? TOL' YOU... TOL' YOU NOT SO BAD... KATSU?

!!

SO SAD AND...

...AND CARING AND...

Y-
YUICHIRO?

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE ALL THAT BAD...

LOST PEOPLE...

!!

BAD THINGS...

SO SORRY, MITSU KEPT YOU DOWN

YOU PROMISED YOU'D STAY WITH ME!

PLEASE PLEASE DON'T GO!

NO! YOU CAN'T!

!

I CAN'T

KA'S-

KA'SU WILL PROTECT YOU

F- FRIENDS ARE FOR-EVER RIGHT?

DON'T BE SAD

THOSE TWO ARE SAD

EYES DON'T

!!

KA'SU

YOU, YOUR MOMMY AND ME. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

FOR REAL. JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE.

WE'LL BE A FAMILY.

HE'S TAKING OUR TRUST!

DADDY'S GIRL...

NO... NOT LIKE THAT!

H-HUH!

WHAT DO I DO?

!!

OH... OMIGOD! YUICHI.RO!

YOU PROMISED!

TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

M-MM

MITSU WHAT..?

TOUCHING MAKES IT ALL FEEL BETTER!

I...I CAN TOUCH IT! TOUCHING MAKES IT BETTER!

MITSU KNOWS... TOUCH AND KISS AND... AND...

I CAN MAKE IT BETTER!

NO

M-
MITSU

NO

.....

NO!!!

DON'T...

!!

!!

AH
HA!

.....

FOR REAL.

F-FOR REAL?

MAKES IT ALL FEEL BETTER.

GO ON... TOUCH.

TOUCHING MAKES IT BETTER.

DADDY'S GIRL...

UH...

SEE HOW MUCH DADDY LOVES HIS LITTLE MITSU?

THE MORE YOU'RE LOVED, THE BIGGER IT GETS.

MITSU ?!

WHAT ARE YOU...?

WHA...

!!

SEE? YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE!

IIIK

LOVE...

S-STOP ...

WHA?

YOU... YOU CAN'T...

UH-HUH, UH-HUH... LOVING AND TOUCHING AND...AND...

HAPPILY EVER AFTER AND NOBODY EVER TAKING!

LOVE CONQUERS ALL. DADDY SAID!

LOVE FOR MITSU... SO MUCH LOVE.

ALWAYS SO MUCH LOVE FOR MITSU.

FOR REAL...

TOUCHING MAKES IT BETTER!

TOUCHING MAKES IT ALL BETTER!

!!

The Men Behind the Madness: An Interview with Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi (Part 4)

Takami: Those were my thoughts as well. Also, since the scenes where they're alive are cut down and condensed into the story, you could say they have a sense of being fulfilled. If they think of that as happiness, then...

Editor: The story of Battle Royale has advanced a lot this past year. What would you say was the biggest plot twist in the last few volumes?

Taguchi: I say it's Mimura's death.

Takami: I really liked Mimura, and I know you did too, Taguchi-san, so Mimura's death was a very difficult part to write.

Taguchi: My staff was saying how meticulous I was when it came to that chapter.

Takami: Some readers of my book sent me letters saying that after Mimura's death, they didn't feel like continuing with the story. After reading the manga, I can understand how they felt. (laughs)

Editor: This is kind of a mean question, but if you two were forced to compete on The Program, how would you do?

Takami: I would probably last about five minutes. (laughs) I'm not very good at thinking on my feet, so I follow patterns. "This worked last time, so I'll do it this time." I can to do that very well, but making things up as I go along is not my strength. On a battlefield, you need to be able to make snap decisions, but I'm not really able to do that, so I probably wouldn't last very long.

Editor: What about you, Taguchi-san?

Taguchi: I recently had a dream about "The Program." I wound up getting shot pretty quickly and woke up, but I realized how strongly I wanted to survive. I also realized how realistically I wouldn't be able to survive. Whether I like it or not, I'm the type to easily give in to my emotions. If there was a girl I liked in the class, I'd risk my life just to see her. My reflexes aren't as good as Shuuya's, and of course, I'm no Kawada or Mimura. It would be impossible. I wouldn't be able to survive.

Editor: I have one last question before we wrap up. Of the 42 students in Class B, who is your favorite? Let's hear it from you first, Takami-san.

Takami: Of the boys, I like Shinji Mimura; of the girls, I like Mitsuko Souma. I feel content with how well I wrote these two characters.

Taguchi: Who is my favorite? I fall in love with all of them when I draw them. Even the villain among villains, Kazushi Niida. I'll be drawing them and think about how great each of them are and fall in love. (laughs)

Takami: I think that love is evident in the work Taguchi-san has done on the series.

Taguchi: But as we said before, *Battle Royale* is fundamentally a work that praises humans, encouraging us to have hope, and that's why I'm able to think of the characters in that way. *Battle Royale* is a series that makes you want to think about the meaning and value of living.

Takami: I know this isn't a new idea, but I think it would be great if books, comics and movies could make people think about these things a bit more often.

Editor: Thank you both very much.

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I'M HERE, LOVE. DADDY

DADDY

IT HURTS DADDY?

WHY DOES IT ALWAYS HURT?

...IT ALWAYS HURTS.

OKAY

I LOVE YOU

IT HURTS

MM.

MM.

AG...

MITSU... HURTS... HUUURTS!!

!!

MITSU... FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...

LOVE ...

MAKE IT BETTER.

HK...

HK...

MAKE IT...

H- HH...

THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW IT'S WORKING!

CHAPTER 63: Traumatic Games

YES! I CAN FEEL IT!

I CAN FEEL THE LOVE!

CAN YOU FEEL IT?

MITSU FEELS THE LOVE! MITSU FEELS IT!

AW-WW

MAKE IT BETTER

MMM-

DOES IT ALWAYS HURT?

FOREVER AND EVER HURT?

.....

WUT?

YOU'LL LEARN.

H-HH...

NO.

NOT IF YOU DO IT RIGHT

FOR REAL, YUICHIRO! FOR REAL!

FOR REAL, LITTLE GIRL, FOR REAL.

SOON'S YOU GROW A SET, THINGS'LL FALL INTO PLACE.

DEEP DEEP

HK! HK!

HLRTS

H-H-HGH!

H-HK!

HK!

S-STOP!

K-K-KILLING ME!

GET OFF! GET OFF OF ME!

BUT YOU... YOU NEED...

.....

STOP ?

!!

I I
GREW
BREASTS

YOU
LOOK PROMISED
TO STAY
WITH
ME

YOU
PROMISED

SEE?
YOU
SEE?

YOU CAN
STAY WITH
ME NOW!

.....

!!

YOU
DON'T
HAVE TO
DO!

YOU PROMISED YOU'D STAY WITH ME!

WAS HE BAD?
I CAN'T AND I ALWAYS GET MY
BEAT IT, ED

SHE HITS, TOO. BECAUSE SHE KNOWS.

MOMMY KNOWS.

.....?

NO MORE LOVE FOR MITSU.

!!

NO MORE LOVE.

HE... ONLY HITS NOW.

YOU CAN HIT ME, TOO. IF YOU PROMISE...

FOR REAL...

THEN CONTROL... BUT NEVER LET THEM KNOW. OH, NO, NO, NO...

TRUST FIRST... ALWAYS TRUST FIRST...

IF THEY KNOW.

WELL...

CAN'T HAVE THEM TRYING TO TAKE BACK NOW, CAN WE?

BAD ENOUGH THEY LIE

ハアッ..

ハアッ..

LIES.
ALL
LIES.

THEY
PROMISE
THEY'LL
STAY.

A-
H-H

A-
H-H

TSK... ORPHANED ... AND SO YOUNG!

WHATEVER WILL BECOME OF POOR MITSUKO?

THEN TELL ME AGAIN... HOW YOU'LL STAY WITH ME.

LIE TO ME, YUICHIRO. PRETEND TO CARE.

WELL, YUICHIRO?

911

...YOU LYING SACK OF SHIT?!

HOW DO YOU LIKE MY EYES NOW...

!!

TAKE IT ALL!

TAKE IT ALL!

CLICK

SHOULD HAVE STAYED, VLICHKO! SHOULD HAVE STAYED!!

AH!

AH!

AH!

555

HE ALMOST HAD SOMETHING ALMOST MADE A CONNECT

ALMOST A "E.S." SOUND

SOUNDS SOUNDS

.....

THANKS, GUYS. IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED. SORTA.

HMM... I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE SAW ME NAKED?

HEH, HEH...A STAR IS BORN...

SURVIVING CONTESTANTS: 15 and counting...

BATTLE ROYALE

SHIRO IWA Junior High School - Grade 9/Class B - Student Roster

Boys: 21 - Girls: 21 - Total: 42

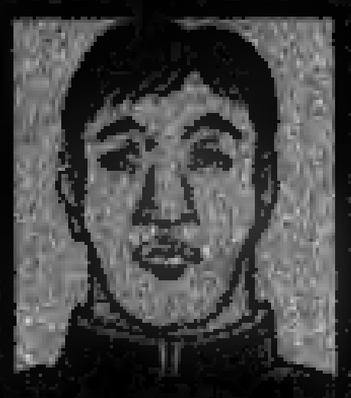
15: Noriko Nakagawa

8: Kayoko Kotohiki

1: Mizuho Inada

15: Shuuya Nanahara

8: Yoji Kuramoto



1: Yoshio Akamatsu

16: Yuka Nakagawa

9: Yuko Sakaki

2: Yukio Utsumi

16: Kazushi Niida

9: Hiroshi Kuronaga

2: Keita Iijima

17: Satomi Noda

10: Hirono Shimizu

3: Megumi Etou

17: Mitsuru Numai

10: Ryuhei Sasagawa

3: Tatsumichi Ooki

18: Fumiyo Fujiyoshi

11: Mitsuko Souma

4: Sakura Ogawai

18: Tadakatsu Hatagami

11: Hiroki Sugimura

4: Toshinori Oda

19: Chisato Matsui

12: Haruka Tanizawa

5: Izumi Kanai

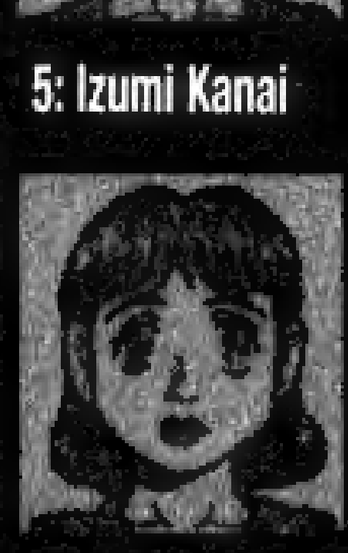
19: Shinji Mimura

12: Yutaka Sato

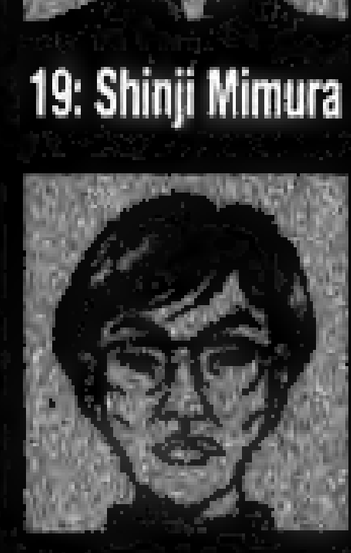
5: Shogo Kawada

20: Kaori Minami

13: Takako Chigusa

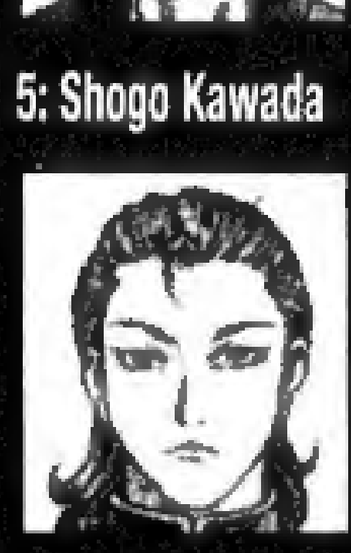


6: Yukiko Kitano



20: Kyoichi Motobuchi

13: Yuichiro Takiguchi



6: Kazuo Kiriyama

21: Yoshimi Yahagi

14: Mayumi Tendo

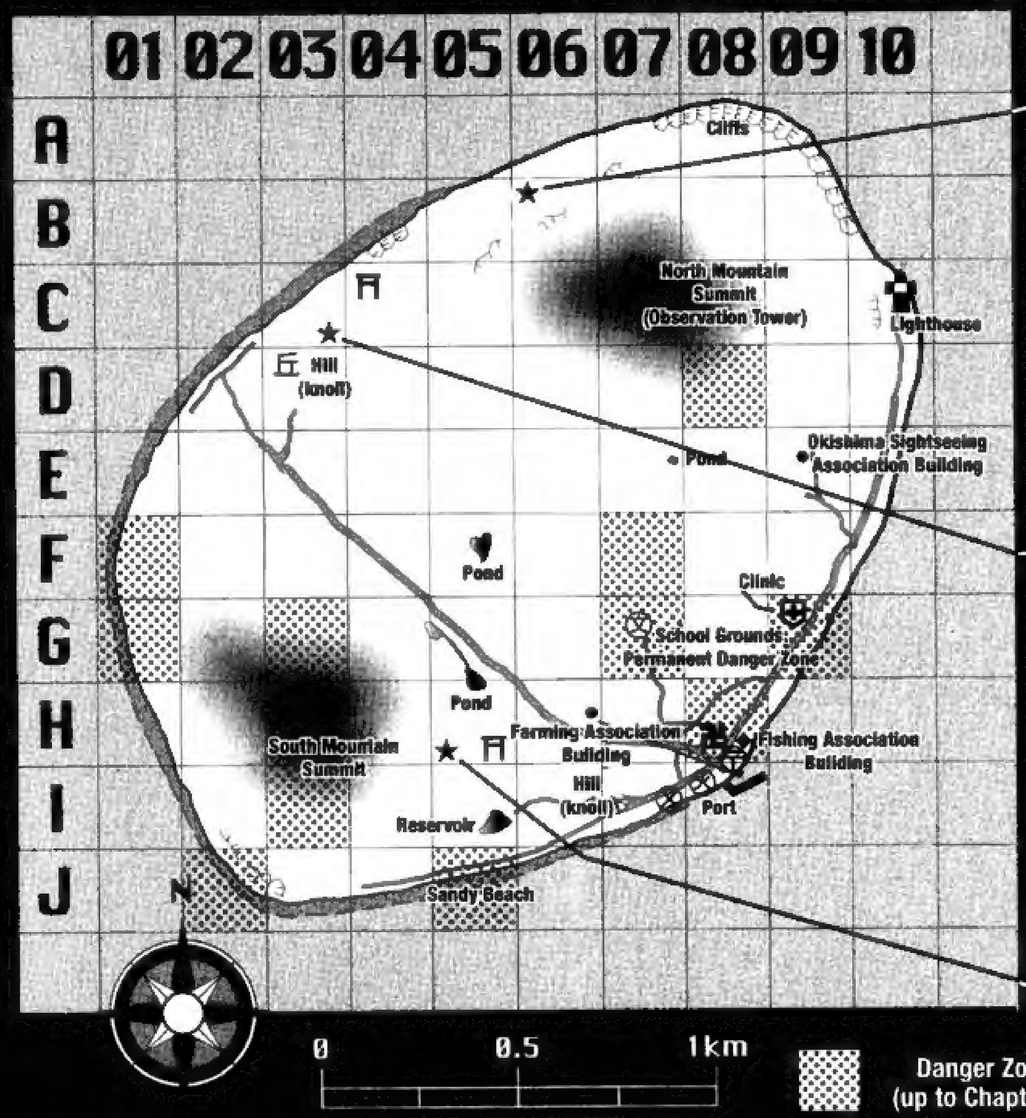
7: Yumiko Kusaka

21: Kazuhiko Yamamoto

14: Sho Tsukioka

7: Yoshitoki Kuninobu

THE PROGRAM: UPDATE
CHAPTERS 56-63



CHAPTER 58-63
Tadakatsu and Yuichiro fall to Mitsuko's poisonous fangs...

CHAPTERS 56
Shogo reassures Noriko about Shuuya.

CHAPTER 56-57
Mitsuko's sad story takes Hiroki off his guard...

PROGRAM CONDITIONS:

All members of the class must kill each other until one survivor remains • All students are supplied with a ration of food, a map of the island, and a weapon • All students will wear an explosive bomb collar that also monitors life signs • Students are free to move about the island but must stay out of designated danger zones that will frequently change locations • If there is more than one survivor at the end of the game, the remaining bomb collars will be detonated.

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KOUSHUN TAKAMI & MASAYUKI TAGUCHI

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– Marc Bernardin, *Entertainment Weekly*

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